4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
SOll Bahia Brazilians SOll

Celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Carlos Gomes, famed Brazilian composer of the operas *Guaraný* and *Fosca*, 389 Bahians gathered in the Instituto Geographico e Historico. Of these, 316 were whites, 61 were mulattoes (predominately light), 11 were blacks, and 1 was a *cafuso*. With the governor of Bahia (white) on the platform were 12 citizens in formal dress, all whites[26] except the governor's bodyguard, a light mulatto in army uniform. Two young ladies in formal dress, both white, sang and declaimed. Of the 3 subsequent speakers, 2 were whites and 1 was a *branco da Bahia*. The military police band, which furnished instrumental music for the occasion, was composed of 9 blacks, 26 mulattoes, 2 whites, 3 *cafusos*, and 1 *mameluco*, under the direction of a mulatto bandmaster. Fifty students from the Instituto de Musica da Bahia sang one of Gomes' compositions. All were whites, except 2 light mulattoes.

Twenty-one women, aged eighteen to forty, were present at a cooking school sponsored by a foreign resident. A novel experience in Bahia, where for generations Negro servants have prepared the food, this school had assumed somewhat the character of a fad. The group included several ladies from upper-class families, well to do, educated and traveled. The wife of the governor occasionally attended. Present were 18 whites and 3 light mulattoes, among the latter a *morena*, perhaps the best-dressed lady of the group. Her father is deceased, and her mother is a dressmaker in moderate circumstances. The girl's beauty, pleasant manner, and constant well-tailored appearance have secured for her admittance into the upper circles. She is often invited into the "best" homes. Another of the mixed-bloods present was

[26] Including one *branco da Bahia*.

4: Pierson Z-4,5 (1935-1937) 1967
SOll Bahia Brazilians SOll

very light. Her mother is a *sarará*, her grandmother is a dark mulatto with kinky hair, and her husband is also a dark mixed-blood. Her family, it is said, has gradually risen from the lower class by reason of constantly taking advantage of every educational opportunity, by increasing their economic competence, and by deliberately cultivating "good manners."

At a "night club," where there were gambling, liquid refreshments, and partners for dancing, of 128 guests,[17] 62 were whites, 40 were *brancos da Bahia*, 21 were mulattoes (several quite dark), 1 was a *cafuso*, and 4 were blacks. Of the 26 female entertainers (dancers and singers), 19 were whites,[18] 4 were *brancas da Bahia*, and 3 were mulattoes (all very light). None of the darker patrons danced during the evening.

In the main gambling-room the group about the table were principally whites, with a few light mulattoes and an occasional dark mixed-blood. In the hallway near the entrance, however, was another gaming-table where stakes were lower. It was patronized principally by dark mulattoes, together with an occasional black, a few *brancos da Bahia*, and very few whites.

Carnival at Bahia lasts three days and is perhaps the most popular festival of the year. At the close of one celebration plans are immediately set on foot for the next. From time to time throughout the ensuing twelve months, newspapers carry reports of the development of these plans, and, beginning about a hundred and fifty days before Carnival, a regular daily feature appears, the time before the big event being checked off, day by day, much as United States newspapers sometimes check off the days preceding Christmas; except

[17] On September 26, 1936. [18] Including a very swarthy Syrian girl.

[SALVADOR]

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*563 647 [665] this, when the aforesaid party was in power, was not offered any of the important positions that he had a right to hope for by reason of his personality, whereas Whites were appointed without having his capabilities." Facts of this order can certainly not be attributed solely to color prejudice. As for the métis, things are different. They have possibilities and, if they are capable, are named to positions of responsibility, although the Whites predominate in *563 562 647 public service. The colored women, as their level of education rises, enter into the administration in open competition with the Whites. In one of the most important sections of Bahia, the controller's office responsible for the huge budgets that this section prepares each year is almost entirely in the hands of a dark mulattress who frequently confers with the secretary of State responsible, under the direct orders of the governor, for this sector of the administration of the State. There are, besides, numerous girls of varied crossbreeding in public positions of different categories.

/59/ The Army

*563 70 Bahia is not an important military center. There are small units of the land, air, and naval forces in the city, and men of any type whatsoever are accepted there as simple soldiers. In their battalions there is no separation between Whites and "men of color," as was the case in the colonial period and in part even while slavery lasted. Certain informants state that it is not easy for a Black to go into aviation, even as a soldier, but others affirm the contrary, and one of them cites the case of a young man who did not go into aviation, but who, having been given certain tests, received as recompense a journey to another State. It is true that this branch, some years ago at any rate, preferred white personnel, but *563 706 today its troops are mixed. The navy had in the city, in addition to a reduced contingent in which finos Whites and retintos Blacks • 874 are mixed, a seamen's preparatory school where any student is accepted. But from time to time a commandant who was accused

[SALVADOR]

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* 563 706 ● 874 [204] of not admitting Blacks came to run this school; this occurred more than 20 years ago, under vehement protests. It is significant that among the articles that the papers published about this event those of a lawyer and professor of English, a black leader originally from a British colony of Africa, stand out in particular (1).

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1. In one of these articles this same Black wrote: "The Black is a preponderant ethnic factor in the formation of the crossbreeding so common in its various nuances in Brazil and, as a Brazilian in fact and by law, he is, before the Constitution, the equal of the White as a citizen of this same Republic. The School of naval apprentices having the right to choose its candidates, this right can be based only on moral precedents, on the aptitudes or the physical stamina of the candidates, and not on physical accidents of color.

* 563 641 Such episodes reveal one of the peculiar aspects of race relations in Bahia, as in all of Brazil, the freedom that has been given colored people to defend their rights themselves, by expressing themselves, sometimes with violence, against prejudice. Now not only is this freedom guaranteed them, but numerous finos Whites of high position, particularly university professors and intellectuals, support them by their writings. At present the naval apprentices are recruited among the poor classes, and numerous Blacks are found among them, as one may verify in the civic and military parades in which they take part. Blacks, métis, and Whites may advance in aviation and the navy up to the grades of sergeant and non-commissioned officer. That of officer, apart from the fact that it cannot be obtained except after specialized courses, presents other difficulties. The land army, of all the national military organizations, is the one that is considered the most /60/ accessible to colored people, even with regard to the officers. Among 12 superior officers who took part in a military

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*563 708 701 [874] police force and in politics. A school for the training of officers destined for this corps was recently created, in order to improve its capacity as a reserve for the army. Among the present students there are a few with dark skin. One may find two explanations for this: either a preliminary selection at the time of the examinations for admission, when it may happen that the young candidates with /61/ dark skin do not, for various reasons, satisfy the required conditions, or because the career of officer now has more prestige and consequently attracts a larger number of Whites. Up [555] to the present time the career of military-police officer represented one of the ways of social ascent for young colored men. Recently, under indictments of various kinds, a heavily pigmented Black who had reached the rank of captain was expelled from the corps. Not long ago, in a group of 27 young officers whose photographs were displayed in a commercial establishment, eight morenos and light mulattoes and one dark mulatto could be seen. But it is also certain that the officers corps at present, though mixed, is composed of Whites in the majority. Moreover, in the course of recent years the officers chosen by the general command to be integrated in the military department of the government of the State have almost without exception been Whites or "whitened": an aide-de-camp of this high authority must be a representative person, in order to make a "good impression" on individuals who come to the government Palace or on those who are passing through Bahia and on whom this officer must pay courtesy visits. A justification that everyone concedes.

*563 701 368 Among the officers of two local corps of civil character, but having a military organization and insignia, the civil guard and corps of firemen, the majority is dark. The Whites or "whitened" are in the minority in the second of these groups. This proportion corresponds to the lesser prestige that these two organizations enjoy, both, however, greatly appreciated for the services that they render to the community.

[SALVADOR]

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*563 562 792 178 tradition of accepting as religious only the daughters of nobles and of high colonial officials, and as "servants" girls of colored or humble extraction. Therefore, the number of morenas or very light mulatto religious is minimal and all are of recent admission.

*563 793 [829] There is also a prejudice, widespread among the priests of the secular clergy, that "the mulattoes are very inclined to concupiscence and to arrogance when they are intelligent." Nevertheless dark priests are ordained. At least 30 o/o of the 176 priests ordained at the archdiocesan theological seminary of Bahia between 1907 and 1951 were colored; among 50 colored priests identified in the register, at least seven were very dark or black. Approximately the same proportion can be noted among the 42 secular priests living in the city. Among those who are best known as sacred orators and who are invited to preach on solemn occasions in the ecclesiastical life and in the religious ceremonies that precede the examinations of the different schools of the local university, there are numerous pardos and Blacks, some of whom enjoy a great deal of prestige as vicars of important parishes, as professors, and as men of letters. The theological seminary of the archdiocese also includes at present an [874] increased number of young colored students, made up of dark mulattoes and Blacks.

/77/ Sports

*563 526 In no matter what study of the most popular sports of Brazil, whether it is a matter of football, rowing, basketball, volleyball, or tennis, it is indispensable to consider that some of them are practiced by certain socio-economic groups and that others, after having been a pastime of some of these groups, have become a profession.

*563 526 575 Tennis in Bahia is a bourgeois sport that an extremely limited number of people play. On the grounds of one of the principal clubs where this sport is played one does not see colored persons, except now and then one or two morenos of high rank from the liberal professions or from commerce. A mulatto practicing a

[SALVADOR]

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*563 571 873 students are admitted, like the others, as probationers at the palace of justice, in the laboratories, in the hospital services of the university, etc., and sometimes enjoy exceptional facilities in pursuing instruction given under the guidance of a professor of renown. It is said, however, that formerly a school for civil *563 •874 [178] engineers did not readily admit colored students. This school is particularly strict, and, because of the limited opening that Bahia represented for engineers some years ago, it had a very small number of students; in spite of this, it awarded diplomas to Blacks and to mulattoes, some of whom achieved a first-class position in their profession or elsewhere; among these is the present director of the school. If one takes at random the lists of students graduated in the course of different years, one can confirm that all types are found among them, the proportion of those with very dark skin being very high. The fact that there are very few civil engineers who are really black is explained by the small number of diplomas awarded by this school in comparison to others of the University of Bahia (1).

1. The Polytechnical School of Bahia in 1918 awarded diplomas to 23 students, two of them mulattoes; in 1948 it awarded a diploma to 51 students, among them one Black and ten métis, and in 1949 to 68 students, among them six métis.

*563 873 875 According to a mulatto informant, "there is a sector prohibited to Blacks and to colored persons: the university professorship." And he relates that having been a candidate for a university chair himself, anyone could say that his competence was unquestionable, but that "he was a mulatto..." Nevertheless he was accepted. Two other informants relate that a young man practicing a liberal profession, assistant in one of the faculties, had been excluded because he was mulatto, despite his recognized competence. The facts seem to contradict such interpretations, for all the faculties of Bahia have always had colored professors, though in different proportions. In the gallery of portraits of the oldest among them,